



## **FULL COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Thursday 18 July 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG**

**Present:** Councillors E Aston, S Bentley, K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, S P Burrell, E M Callear, L D Carter, C Chikandamina, G H Cook, E Davies, P Davis, F Doran, N A Dugmore, A R H England, N A M England, S Handley, Z Hannington, C Healy, T L B Janke, A S Jhawar, J Jones, L Lewis, G Luter, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, H Morgan, T J Nelson, R A Overton, I Preece, S J Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, H Rhodes, P J Scott, S Syrda, G Thomas, P Thomas, J Thompson, R Tyrrell, J Urey, O Vickers, P Watling and D R W White

#### **In Attendance:**

**Apologies:** Councillors S Davies, A J Eade, G C W Latham-Reynolds, G L Offland, L Parker, R Sahota, W L Tomlinson, K T Tomlinson, K Tonks and C R Turley

#### **16        Prayers and Reflections**

Ian Oliver of the Dawley Baptist Church said prayers.

#### **17        Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **18        Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 23 May 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

#### **19        Election of Leader of the Council**

It was moved by Councillor H Rhodes, seconded by Councillor C Healy that Councillor L D Carter be elected as Leader of the Council until the conclusion of the 2026/27 municipal year.

**RESOLVED** – that Councillor L D Carter be elected as Leader of the Council until the conclusion of the 2026/27 municipal year.

#### **20        Leader's Report & Announcements**



The Leader thanked Councillor Rhodes and Councillor Healy for their support and noted Councillor Rhodes' exemplary service.

The Leader promised residents that he would be honest, determined and committed and would work hard to never fall below the standards that had been set.

The Leader thanked Shaun Davies MP for his commitment and dedication during his eight years as Leader and gave details of his achievements which included the pandemic, protecting services at the Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) and continuing to have the lowest Council Tax in the Midlands. He praised his positive outward vision, his efforts to secure investment into the borough and always putting residents first.

The Leader spoke about his journey into politics and the support he had received and he had been lucky to have met so many like-minded people on his journey.

The Leader took seriously his service in public office and would continue to do the right thing for residents and diligently pursue the best for the borough whilst enhancing opportunities, particularly in relation to education and he would invest in schools, skills hubs and stronger links with universities. He would continue to care and protect Adult Social Care and Children's Services, invest in public transport and cycleways and ensure continued access to green spaces and provide Green Flag parks.

The Leader confirmed that green waste collections without additional charges and free car parking would continue and he would look to continue to have the lowest Council Tax in the Midlands. He would continue to invest into front line services via partnership working and continue to lead the campaign to protect the services at PRH.

The Leader would strive to find the common ground and have difficult and honest conversations in order to deliver what was best for local residents, but this would not be without its challenges. He thanked Members for allowing him the privilege of becoming leader and he would try every day to be the best reflection of the borough.

## **21 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor asked Members to note the engagements undertaken since the last Council meeting in May 2024.

The Mayor congratulated Shaun Davies and Mark Pritchard on their election as Members of Parliament for the Telford and The Wrekin constituencies following the election on 4 July and wished them well.



In the short space of time since the Mayor had been elected, he had been very fortunate to attend a number of engagements both at home and outside the borough and he had enjoyed meeting local residents, event organisers and businesses and looked forward to meeting many more.

The Mayor had attended the VIP Crucial Crew Day, which he had been lucky enough to attend last year as Deputy Mayor. The event was very informative and it was good to learn about all the new scenarios that were being brought to the sessions this year.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their kind messages and looked forward to seeing what was to come over the next year.

## **22 Councillor Questions On Notice**

The following questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 6.2.2:-

- (a) Councillor P J Scott asked the following question of Councillor C Healy, Cabinet Member: Climate Action, The Environment, Heritage & Visitor Economy

"Newport Canal is a Telford and Wrekin Council owned asset that is highly regarded in the area by all residents and visitors. The water quality and general health of the waterway is vital to all flora and fauna. Can the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, The Environment and Heritage and Visitor Economy confirm what the council are doing to keep our canal healthy now and in the long term?"

Councillor C Healy responded that Newport Canal was an important highly valued Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Natural England monitored consents and assents and the council undertook daily maintenance together with scheduled grass cutting and hedge maintenance along the tow path. A special contractor was due to undertake weed control in late summer following permission from Natural England and this would be communicated to the local angling clubs and Members. A water environment grant had been granted by the Environment Agency and this had enabled Shropshire Wildlife Trust to undertake work to manage some of the wildlife species during 2019-2021 but this had not been required during the last couple of years. The canal was a dynamic environment and work would continue with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent.

Councillor P J Scott asked a supplementary question. "A while ago it was suggested that the canal, Victoria Park and Norbroom Park would become green flagged was that still happening".



Councillor C Healy responded that an application for the Victoria Park and the Canal would be submitted next year, but this currently did not include Norbroom Park at this stage as this created too big an area in terms of the green flag award.

- (b) Councillor R Tyrrell asked the following question of Councillor R A Overton, Cabinet Member: Homes & Enforcement and Customer Services

“Please can the cabinet member confirm this Council continues to prioritise the health, wellbeing and comfort of its residents, and the quiet enjoyment of their properties.”

Councillor R A Overton responded that the council were on the side of residents and were working with the regulator, Environment Agency and the site operator to put a robust action plan in place and would hold the operators to account to ensure the actions were delivered. The council had been quick to organise a well-attended session for residents with the Environment Agency and site operators and air quality monitoring equipment had recently been installed in proximity to the landfill site with results to be provided to residents via a website. They were working hard to bring the matter to a close.

Councillor R Tyrrell noted the excellent efforts of the agencies working together alongside officers and asked a supplementary question as to “why had there been separate briefings to Members who weren’t part of the administration despite the request for a joint update, why was this not a joint update and how did this reconcile the principle of behaving with integrity and openness”.

Councillor R A Overton responded that two briefing sessions had been held, one in consultation with Ward Members of the wards only slightly affected by the Potters Landfill site and a further session for those Councillors whose wards were fully affected and they were held separately as they required different information.

- (c) Councillor S Bentley asked the following question of Councillor L D Carter, Leader

“Can the new Leader reaffirm the commitment his predecessor made that there will not be green bin charges in T&W until at least 2027 and that the collections will continue as at present every other week, dates only changing with Bank hols etc?”



Councillor L D Carter responded that he understood the concerns following the announcement by Shropshire Council that they were introducing a £56 per year recycling charge for green waste. He gave a cast iron guarantee that the council would do the right thing and continue free green waste collections and that they would always commit to this and collections would remain at the current frequency.

Councillor S Bentley asked a supplementary question that as rural areas had large gardens and more than one green bin, would there be any change to the number of bins to each property.

Councillor L D Carter responded that everything would remain the same particularly in relation to household recycling centres to be open every day, free car parking on council car parks, libraries and community centres open and free swimming for the under 25s and this would be accomplished by investing wisely.

(d) Councillor N A Dugmore asked the following question of R A Overton, Cabinet Member: Homes & Enforcement and Customer Services

“Due to the holiday period and many Parish Councils not meeting until September can the consultation period for the Community Governance Review be extended to allow for an informed response to the proposals by both Parish Councillors and residents?”

Councillor R A Overton responded that he understood the position and that the holiday period was fast approaching. Some Parish and Town Councils were holding extraordinary meetings prior to the summer break and other were holding meetings the first week back in September. Due to the legal timetable and final publication of the Community Governance Review (CGR) the timetable was unable to be moved. The council would ask at the Boundary Review Committee meeting that the final response date be moved until 4 September 2024. The second round of consultations would take place in order that key stakeholders and residents could contribute as it had been requested that responses were received from as many people as possible and there had been a disappointing number of responses from the first round of consultation. This would be raised at the Boundary Review Committee being held on 19 July 2024.

Councillor N A Dugmore asked a supplementary question as to “why had the Boundary Review Meeting due to be held on 2 May 2024 been cancelled without it being replaced which meant the public consultation was delayed there was then a tight timescale”.



Councillor R A Overton responded that the meeting timetable had been pushed back due to the general election and that he would provide a written response.

## **23 Cabinet Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting of the Council**

Members received the report on the Cabinet decisions made since the last meeting of the Council.

### Better Homes for All

*Councillor T J Nelson asked for clarification on how and what method the council would and could undertake to guarantee objectivity and fairness in relation to NuPlace complaints and issues when investigating itself. Social housing landlords could be investigated by Homes England and the council who could issue punishments and fines. As NuPlace was a private landlord, how could the council be objective and fair in this case.*

Councillor R A Overton responded that the council took all complaints seriously and they had received complaints which had been dealt with. The council was on the side of the residents and where NuPlace was seen to be failing they would continue to give the tenants the best service possible.

## **24 Recommendations from Cabinet**

### (a) 2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report

The Cabinet Member: Finance and Governance presented the 2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report which provided an update on the revenue budget and progress relating to the capital programme. The report gave details of some changes to the capital programme which required formal approval.

**RESOLVED – that the changes to the capital programme and all associated changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, including Treasury and Prudential Indicator be approved.**

### (b) 2023/24 Financial Outturn Report

The Cabinet Member: Finance and Governance presented the 2023/24 Financial Outturn Report which set out the final position for the year in relation to the revenue budget, capital programme and income collection. The report sought the necessary approval to comply with financial regulations.

**RESOLVED – that:**



- a) **the revenue outturn position for 2023/24, which remains subject to audit by the Council's external auditors, and related virements be approved;**
- b) **the transfers to reserves, and associated approval to the relevant members of the Senior Management Team (as determined by the Chief Executive) after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member to spend the reserves be approved;**
- c) **the capital outturn position and related supplementary estimates, re-phasing and virements be approved;**
- d) **delegated authority be granted to the Interim Director: Finance & HR to make any changes required, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Customer Services and Governance; and**
- e) **the performance against income targets be noted.**

## **25      CSE Inquiry**

In accordance with the provisions of s100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, by reason of special circumstances, namely the report of the Independent Chair of the Independent Inquiry – Telford Child Sexual Exploitation published on 16 July 2024, the Chair of the meeting was of the opinion that this item should be considered as a matter of urgency.

The Leader informed Members that following the conclusion of the CSE Inquiry two years ago, and publication of the report making 47 recommendations, the council was tasked with setting up an independent governance structure which involved key partners such as the Police, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner and health partners to deliver against the 47 recommendations. As part of this work, the Council chose to include the views and expertise of three lived experience consultees.

The Independent Chair, Tom Crowther KC, was invited back to Telford, earlier than expected, in March 2024 to consider how work to meet the recommendations of his original report had progressed. The Independent Chair issued his final report on 16 July 2024 but the Leader acknowledged that this did not represent the end of the council's work and the report also made that clear.

The report was positive and commended the Council on its approach which was now an admirable role that others could learn from. There were now bold initiatives to protect children against CSE. Alongside its key stakeholders there had been a dedicated approach to implementing change which was





testament to the tenacity and guidance of the lived experience consultees who held the council to account and supported and shaped the delivery of improvements.

The Leader thanked everyone involved with the CSE inquiry.

During the debate, some Members congratulated the council on the report and the work of the officers involved. Good progress had been made and it was hoped children would now have the confidence to come forward too, so that the criminals could be tackled and be put behind bars. Other Members asked if the annual CSE report could be brought to Full Council more often and thanked Tom Crowther KC, together with the three lived experience consultees in bringing this inquiry to a positive conclusion. It was asked that the council put on record a tribute to the dedication and courage of the lived experience consultees who had been invaluable in ensuring the thoroughness of the inquiry. In order to continue to keep children safe it was important to continue the fight against CSE to prevent it happening again.

**RESOLVED** – that

- a) **the outcome of the review undertaken by the Independent Chair of the Inquiry into CSE in Telford be noted;**
- b) **the work of officers in progressing the recommendations contained within the report of the Independent Inquiry into CSE in Telford published on 12 July 2022 be endorsed;**
- c) **to continue working with partners and the lived experience consultees through the independently-chaired Strategic Implementation Group to ensure that continuous improvement in relation to CSE is undertaken inclusive of those with lived experience be agreed;**
- d) **the commitment, made through the budget-setting process and via Cabinet, to maintaining funding for the CATE team as set out in recommendation 7 of the Inquiry's report published on 12 July 2022 be reaffirmed;**
- e) **officers to take steps through the budget-setting process for 2025/26 to ensure funding for Children's Safeguarding and for The Holly Project; and**
- f) **sincere thanks and gratitude to the three independent lived experience consultees, Holly Archer, Scarlett Jones and Joanne Phillips for their commitment in supporting the Council to fulfil its recommendations be given.**





**Telford & Wrekin**  
**Co-operative Council**

**Protect, care and invest  
to create a better borough**

The meeting ended at 7.03 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** Thursday 14 November 2024